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The Dance Magazine

Magazine for ballroom dancers



The Dance Magazine

The Dance Magazine is a free magazine made for and made by ballroom dancers. You can read about ballroom dancing and other dance styles. We also give you the opportunity to put your add or messages in it. You can send them to me by e-mail.

The Dance Magazine is an edition from Fred Bolder's Ballroom Site

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You can download this magazine as a Word-file for free.

The Dance Magazine also has its own domain.

url: <http://www.dansblad.nl>

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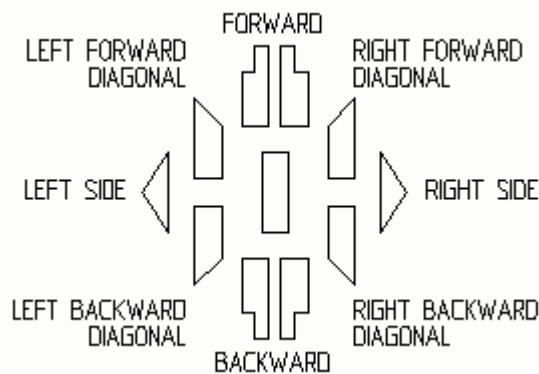
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Dance notation – part 3

By: Fred

When writing down the rhythm of a figure in a table, one time we use terms like Slow and Quick and the other time we use the music count. For the Slow waltz it is best to use the music count, but for the Slowfox it is best to use Slow and Quick. The terms Slow and Quick indicate the duration of a step. When dancing a Quickstep, a Slow takes two counts of the music unless the next step is an And. In that case the duration of the Slow is shorter. How much shorter depends on the dance and the situation. Of course this can be quite confusing. Therefore in some cases it is better to write down the beatvalues as well. Let's look at the world of music. After all, music and dance have a lot in common. If you give sheet music to an experienced pianist, he or she will play it in the way it is meant. Apparently, the sheet music contains all the information that is needed. It also doesn't matter what the nationality of the pianist is. There should be a sort of sheet music for dancers. You already guess it, there exists several notation methods that look like sheet music. After studying some methods I have decided to learn Labanotation, because this notation can be used for every type of dance and thus also for ballroom dancing. The inventor of Labanotation is Rudolf von Laban.

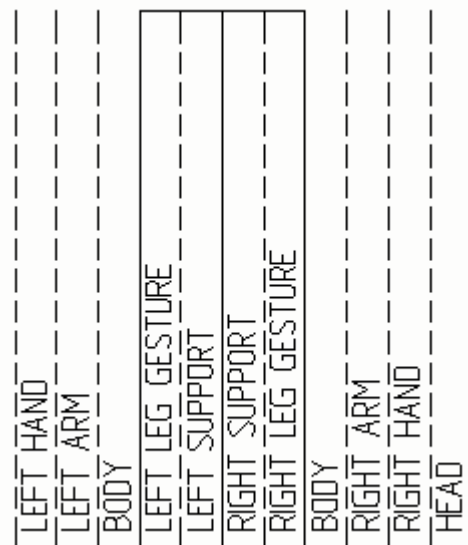


We read sheet music just like a book from left to right, but we have to read Labanotation from bottom to top. This seems strange, but I find it very handy. Because of the use of many symbols, Labanotation is just like sheet music language independent.

On the picture you can see the symbols for the directions. The symbols have quite a logical shape. A symbol points in the direction that is meant with it. The “right forward diagonal” symbol does not mean that you have to turn 1/8 clockwise and then step forward. The symbols

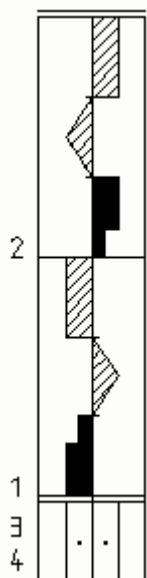
do not indicate a turn. The symbols can be used for both feet. You can also step with your left foot in the right forward direction. Stepping to the right side with your left foot seems impossible, because then you have to step through your right foot. Nevertheless this symbol is also used for the left foot, but in combination with another symbol that indicates if you have to cross in front or behind the right foot. In that case the movement is not only sideward, but also a little forward or backward.

To indicate when you have to make a certain movement, the symbols are placed on a staff that is similar to music. The staff is divided by columns as you can see on the picture. The dashed lines are left out in a real notation. The columns right from the center indicate the movements for the right side of the body and the columns left from the center indicate the movements for the left side of the body. For a normal step with the right foot we have to place a symbol in the “Right support” column. A movement with the right foot without weight on that foot like a Tap or a Kick has to be indicated in the “Right leg gesture” column.



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The columns “Left support” and “Right support” can also be used for indicating sitting or lying, but that doesn’t often occur with ballroom dancing. If there is no symbol in these two columns for a certain time, it means that you have to jump unless a hold symbol is used. If you read all this, I can imagine that you have a lot of questions. Labanotation is a vast notation method. For example, you can indicate that you tap the right shoulder of your partner with your left little finger. Don’t try to understand everything at once. By studying examples



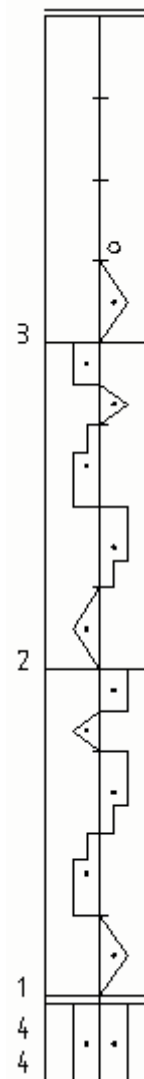
you will learn more and more. That’s the way I am learning it. Let’s start with an example.

On the picture you can see the men’s steps of the Slow waltz figure that I have explained in “Dance notation – part 1” (see dance magazine 89). You have to read Labanotation from bottom to top. Left you can see that the dance is in 3/4 time. Next to this time signature the start position is indicated. There is a rectangle with a dot in the columns “Left support” and “Right support”. A rectangle means “in place”, so you are standing with closed feet and weight on both feet. A dot indicates medium level. In this example it means that you are standing with straight knees. If we read further we see a horizontal double line. This is the start of the figure. Left we see the number 1 which indicate that this is the start of the first measure. There is a horizontal line at the start of every measure. This figure takes two measures of the music. 3/4 time means that there are 3 counts in a measures. The counts are separated by small lines. The length of a symbol indicates the duration of a movement. In this example each movements takes 1 beat. We start with a forward step with the left foot. The symbol is

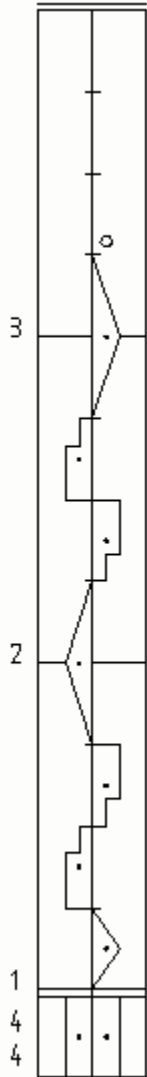
blackened which means deep level. We step with bent knees. On the second count of the first measure we step to the side with the right foot. The symbol is hatched which means high level. We have to step on the toes. The next step has to be in place. We close the left foot to the right foot. This step is also on the toes. During the second measure we dance Back – Side – Close starting with the right foot.

You can see that you can read a lot of information from this simple drawing such as which foot moves, the direction of a movement, the rhythm and “rise and fall”. There are no turn and position symbols in this example, so we can start in every direction and we don’t turn. I have left out these symbols to keep it simple, but the example is a good notation. Directions are very important for ballroom dancing, but I will explain that later. Time for another example.

On the next picture you can see men’s steps of a Cha Cha Cha figure. The different lengths of the symbols tell us that not every movement has the same duration. All steps has to be danced with straight knees (normal height), because there is a dot in every symbol. The Cha Cha Cha is danced to music in 4/4 time. We start with a side step to the right with the right foot. The is the preparation step. After this we step forward with our left foot. Hereafter we replace the weight back to the right foot. In Labanotation this is mostly notated as a step backward, but there are other more complex methods to indicate a rock step. After this we dance Side – Close – Side where the first two steps have to be danced two times faster than the previous steps, because the length of these symbols are half the length of the other symbols. After this we dance Back – Replace weight – Side – Close – Side starting with the right foot. As you can see, the last step of this figure is danced on the first count of the third measure.

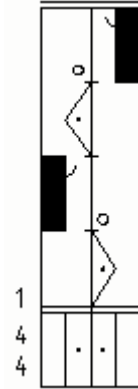


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On the next picture you can see the men's steps of a Rumba figure. Compare this with the Cha Cha Cha figure. We start again with the preparation step with the right foot. After this we dance Forward – Replace weight – Side where the last step have to be danced two times slower than the previous steps, because the length of that symbol is double the length of the other symbols. After this we dance Back – Replace weight – Side starting with the right foot.

Here you can see what they dance in a disco nowadays and that is Side – Tap – Side – Tap. The symbol for a Tap is in one of the Leg gesture columns, because a Tap is a movement without weight. The little arc that points up indicates that you have to tap with your toes. If the arc points down it means that you have to tap with the heel and there are more symbols. The small circle in the Support column is a hold symbol and indicates that the weight stays on that foot until the next symbol in a Support column.



There is a lot more to write about Labanotation. I haven't explained turns, jumps and dance holds yet, but now you know some of the basics.

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Make your own dance cd

By: Fred

I was searching on <http://www.music.md> for folk dance music from Moldova, but when I found some ballroom dance music I decided to search for more and below you can see the result. The site is slow and there is a download limit of 10 mp3 files per day, but you don't have to search. The song "Dragostea din tei" was a number 1 hit in The Netherlands. I like the song "Oriunde ai fi" that is performed by the same group.

- 1 Fata cu ochii de foc..... Ruxanda..... Viennese waltz 60
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=293>
- 2 Dulce rai Olga Ciolacu..... Samba / Tango 53 / 30
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=105>
- 3 Anii mei si tineretea..... Ian Raiburg Samba..... 49
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=26>
- 4 Дарите Женщинам Цветы Ian Raiburg Slowfox 30
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=26>
- 5 Noptile romantice Ian Raiburg Cha Cha Cha 32
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=26>
- 6 Vrajitoare (Anatol Mirzencu) Pavel Bechet Paso Doble 61
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=93>
- 7 Provocare (Aura) Anatol Lupu..... Jive 43
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=112>
- 8 АЛЫЕ ТЮЛЬПАНЫ (Ольга Чолаку).... Ian Raiburg Slowfox 29
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=26>
- 9 Femeia pe care o iubesc..... Saveliu Cojocaru Samba..... 50
<http://www.music.md/music.php?action=discogr&gid=113>
- 10 ... Fata de fulgi (Vlad Negruți) Anatol Ionas..... Rumba 23
<http://www.music.md/music.php?action=discogr&gid=43>
- 11 ... O lacramioara primavara Anatol Ionas..... Quickstep 49
<http://www.music.md/music.php?action=discogr&gid=43>
- 12 ... Oriunde ai fi..... O-Zone..... Nightclub Two Step ... 16
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=37&action=discogr#aid72>
- 13 ... Dragostea din tei..... O-Zone..... Cha Cha Cha 33
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=37&action=discogr#aid72>
- 14 ... De la Cluj la Chisinau..... Lăutarii Folk dance
<http://www.music.md/music.php?gid=60>

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The Rich Life

by William R. Stimson



Photo by the author

Ballroom dancing outdoors in Taiwan early in the morning

While photographing an early morning tai chi group in an empty parking lot near my home here Taiwan, I noticed a man and a woman dancing their hearts out in the adjoining parking lot, also empty. Ballroom dance music issued from a portable player sitting on the pavement. I snapped this photo and then walked on down through a series of parks taking pictures of a succession of tai chi groups. When the camera was full and wouldn't take any more pictures, I headed back home. As I passed by it again, I saw that the parking lot with the early morning tai chi group was now empty but the adjoining one with the dancers was filled with couples spinning gracefully around, arm in arm, as if they were at a grand ball.

If I could distill the essence of Taiwanese culture, at least as I see it -- that is to say, what makes it so special for me -- it's this quality it has, that nothing is wasted. Often I've wondered why Taiwanese eat so many different kinds of things - even rattlesnakes, sea cucumbers, and tiny pointy ocean snails are relished here. In time, I came to understand that a people like these, who have lived through adversity, would over time have learned how to utilize every little thing. Nothing is wasted here.

The week before I left New York City to move to Taiwan, the recycling program was suspended in Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island. The reason the city gave: the program was too costly to operate. That would never happen in Taiwan. The Taiwanese make big money from recycling and are committed to it. They even recycle waste food, not just from restaurants, but from ordinary homes. Some of it is made into fertilizer, some of it is used as feed for pigs. So with the Taiwanese, it's quite natural that even an empty parking lot, early in the morning, that's not being used, finds a function and becomes a valuable commodity.

This ballroom dancing group can be free because it doesn't have to rent a hall. The parking lot is empty early every morning. No expensive air conditioning system is needed. Outdoors

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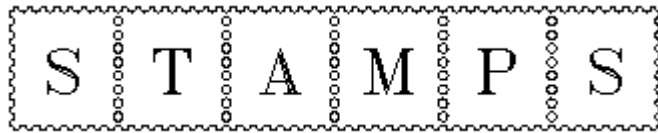
early in the morning the air is fresh and sweet. Ordinary people can perfect their dance steps, get exercise, polish their social skills, and enjoy the company of friends and neighbors. Down a ways in one direction is a different parking lot where another group plays badminton. Over the opposite way is one where still another group goes through an aerobic exercise routine to the accompaniment of disco music. The streets and parks of Taiwan are alive early every morning with all kinds of life. It is a wonderful thing to see these enterprising people snatching a few moments from their busy schedules and coming out onto the streets to do what they love and to share that love with others, without any money exchanging hands.

What impresses me most about Taiwan is the way the simpler people here have of making so much out of so little. Every time I see it, I am inspired to do the same. For instance, I have started saving the coffee grounds and using them to fertilize the ferns. Now I'm growing the biggest ferns I've ever seen. And for the moment or two it takes for the coffee to brew, instead of standing around waiting, I have gotten into the habit of doing a simple stretching exercise. After only a few months of this I find that for the first time in my life I have become limber enough to touch my toes at will. These small victories make me know how rich I am. It's not about owning things or having money, but the joy of discovering how much profit there is in more fully using what I already have.

* * *

William R. Stimson is an American writer who lives in Taiwan. More of his writing can be found at <http://www.billstimson.com>

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By: Fred

Here are some nice dance stamps. Read the dance magazines 55, 57, 61 and 79 for more.



Le Dans - La Danse - De Dans - La Danse - De Dans - La Danse - De Da



Castor alias Chris Vanzendriensche



Belgium 2006

Rock & Roll, Waltz, Tango, Cha Cha Cha en Samba



France 2001
Rock & Roll



France 2006
Argentine Tango



Norfolk 2006
The Bounty Ball

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Nice links

By: Fred

Ballroom dance music titles

<http://www.tanzmusik-online.de/>

<http://www.ballroomdancing.de/> (Service, Tanzmusik)

<http://www.hobby-tanzen.eu/tanzmusik/tanzmusik.php>

http://www.martinvogler.de/ta_musik1.html

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~fghb/0501.htm>

Photographs

<http://www.dance-corner.net/photo/index.php>

<http://wrestlingimax.proboards70.com/index.cgi?board=pic&action=display&thread=1137482041>

Dansen.blog.nl

<http://dansen.blog.nl/>

Dance news

Camilla Dallerup

<http://www.camilladallerup.com/>